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ABSTRACT

As part of New Mexico's investigation into competency-based certification, it was decided in 1973 that the most equitable, sound, and reliable approach would be through models development. Guidelines for model development include the following elements: replicability, internal evaluation, external evaluations, and several components. The components are as follows: (a) the models must take accreditation into account, providing methods whereby school evaluations for accreditation purposes can be accomplished; (b) the models must provide a training component which may be in some form of a broadly defined inservice concept; (c) the models must provide for a needs assessment; (d) the models must be based on district- and building-level objectives which are commensurate with current statewide programs of objective evaluation; (e) the model must provide a definition of competence in terms of goal accomplishment for all levels of educational tasks; and (f) the models must be directed to all individuals being certified under Section 77-8-1, New Mexico Annotated, 1953 compilation. Model locations have been identified. The schools involved in models development during 1973-74 will design the models, implement them, and then provide adequate opportunity and assistance to the state department for evaluation of the effectiveness of the models. The task force is committed to the concept of allowing the models to shape the common plan for certification and recertification rather than to the concept of developing a plan and requiring that the models conform to it. (JA)

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INTERIM REPORT II
COMPETENCY BASED CERTIFICATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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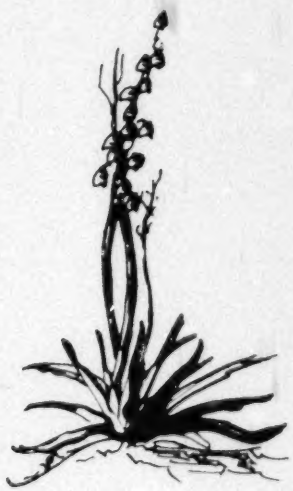

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO
JANUARY 1974

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INTRODUCTION

New Mexico has moved into the second phase this year of a detailed study of the application in this state of competency based education/certification.

The investigation in New Mexico has been a natural outgrowth of educational developments and concerns in the state during recent years. These developments have come in the areas of educational finance, accountability, evaluation, inservice education, certification and research on the correlations between teacher education and student achievement, among others.

More directly, one of the objectives developed for state education by State Superintendent Leonard J. De Layo calls for interdependent and parallel methods of evaluation, accreditation and certification. Furthermore, assessment of student achievement and program effectiveness in New Mexico has evolved into a program of criterion-referenced evaluation. Both lead logically to development of some form of competency based education/certification.

These items, along with education concerns expressed statewide by teacher organizations, lay groups and the legislature regarding the effectiveness and validity of public school programs, have pointed to competency based approaches. It is generally felt that under the current method of educator evaluation, competency is not being ascertained. A new method must be developed which is just. That is, a method which is just for the teachers, for the administrators, for the state and particularly for the school children of New Mexico.

Concern has been expressed by the legislature, lay groups and the State Department of Education that current methods of educator evaluation and certification fall short of the ideal. Under the traditional system, there is no real method of determining whether our educators actually are promoting learning in the schools and meeting the district objectives for their school children.

For instance, during the past ten years, the State Board of Education has heard more than 22 appeals from tenure educators dismissed from their jobs by local education agencies. Although a majority of these dismissals ostensibly have been for incompetency, records of the appeals in almost all cases fail to substantiate incompetency.

Educators are concerned about this. They also are concerned that some equitable and effective method be developed to enable the state or the local school administration to accurately measure their effectiveness. They also are concerned that some method be developed which will enable them to know exactly what is expected of them in the schools and in their other professional, community and personal relations and activities.

With these concerns in mind, State Superintendent De Layo in late 1972 appointed a three-member task force from the State Department of Education to investigate the concept of competency based certification. He charged the task force with investigating the feasibility of such an approach and with making recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding possible directions and action. He further committed the State Department to designing a competency based certification plan for 1975, and the task force has now gone into phase two of a four-phase process in reaching this goal.

Immediately after being appointed in 1972, the task force began work gathering materials on competency based education and certification. Reports, models, bibliographies, newsletters, books and personal letters were gathered from all areas of the United States. All the materials were analyzed by the task force. In addition, the task force sponsored a number of meetings to solicit comments from experts in the field of competency based education regarding their programs, their ideas and their concerns. These meetings were attended by New Mexico representatives from institutions of higher learning, local administrations, teacher organizations and other interested groups by invitation of the task force.

During a regular meeting of the State Board of Education in October 1972, the task force recommended that the Board authorize continued study of the concept. Members of the task force told the Board that more questions than solutions had been uncovered by the investigation to that point and more time was needed to explore every possible method before firm recommendations could be made.

More investigations were conducted, and it was determined in the fall of 1973 that the most equitable, sound and reliable approach would be through models development. In October 1973 the State Board concurred in this approach, reaffirming support for continued study. At the same time, the State Board re-emphasized that a commitment to any specific form of competency based education/certification has yet to be made and any such commitment will be made only after complete study and evaluation of any models developed during the study phases.

Supported by these reaffirmations, the task force took immediate action to begin implementing the second phase of the extensive study, continuing to operate with a sense of caution and a commitment of relevance to the geographic, economic and sociological variables evident in New Mexico.

PHASE TWO - THE ACTION

Models Criteria

The New Mexico task force feels that if a competency based approach is approved for implementation in this state, it will have to be approved on the basis of a sound foundation relevant to the specific needs of New Mexico and on the basis of proven, positive results in New Mexico's classrooms. The objective is competency: the method by which competency is achieved is generally problematical.

Therefore, the task force developed and disseminated broad, flexible guidelines to be used by the schools contemplating development and implementation of competency systems during the 1973-1974 school year.

The necessary elements of the models are clearly pointed out; the methods by which these elements are included or accomplished by the models are left to the discretion of the local schools so that the local conditions may be taken into consideration.

The models developed, then, are to be based on the following elements:

--Replicability. That is, the model should, with little difficulty be able to be used in a similar school under similar conditions.

--Internal Evaluation. That is, the school must show the State Department of Education where the critical decision points are as the model is developed. Adequate records must be kept which will assist others when the model is being evaluated.

--Components. This element is composed of several subelements, all of which must be present in the actual model as it is implemented.

(1) The models must take accreditation into account, providing methods whereby school evaluations for accreditation purposes can be accomplished. (Under the 1973-1974 and 1974-1975 study phases, however, no school will jeopardize its accreditation or certificated employees by developing a model to effectuate some form of competency based education.)

(2) The models must provide a training component which may be in some form of a broadly defined inservice concept designed to help the educators overcome deficiencies and gain necessary competencies.

(3) The models must provide for a needs assessment which takes into account such things as priorities, educational needs of students, and physical and psychological needs of teachers, among others.

(4) The models must be based on district-and building-level objectives which are commensurate with existing programs of objective evaluation currently ongoing statewide.

(5) The models must provide a definition of competence in terms of goal accomplishment for all levels of educational tasks, including those of teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, etc.

(6) Finally, the models must be directed to all individuals being certified under Sec. 77-8-1, New Mexico Statutes Annotated, 1953 compilation.

--External Evaluations. That is, the model must include an evaluation method which measures as objectively as possible the accomplishment of the three foregoing elements of replicability, internal evaluation and components.

Although all the required elements are important, the task force particularly stresses the training component. It is the philosophy of the task force that competency based education models should be of assistance to the educators. Therefore, the models should be geared to determining what an educator's training needs might be, based on student needs, and then providing that educator with specific training needs thereby maximizing the potential for student learning and achievement.

Model Locations

With criteria established, the task force began soliciting volunteers from among the schools in the 88 districts of the state to initiate the development and implementation of the first set of models based on New Mexico variables.

The first ten volunteers have been identified, and the State Department of Education's task force, as well as other Department personnel and resource people from institutions of higher learn-

ing and other agencies and organizations, are now working with the volunteer schools, upon specific request, to assist in the task.

Initial work on models has begun in the following schools and/or districts for 1973-1974: Las Cruces, Floyd, Los Alamos, Albuquerque (for career education program only), Taos, Mora, Cuba, Espanola, East Las Vegas and West Las Vegas.

The last six districts listed are involved in development of a consortium model in cooperation with the Teacher Corps project at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas. The Teacher Corps was one of the first national groups to endorse the concept of competency based education/certification and has assisted in the development of other such models in other areas of the United States during the past several years.

The schools and districts involved in models development during 1973-1974 will design the models, implement them and then provide adequate opportunity and assistance to the State Department for evaluation of the effectiveness of the models. This evaluation is to be completed by the summer of 1974, and results are to be made available prior to the fall of 1974.

At that point, the task force will appear before the State Board of Education once more with a report and/or recommendations regarding the study.

PHASE THREE AND PHASE FOUR: THE GOAL

As part of its implementation of study plans for competency based education/certification in New Mexico, the task force will solicit ten more volunteer schools to develop, implement and evaluate models for the 1974-1975 school year, depending upon direction given by the State Board in the fall of 1974.

At this point in the study, no changes are contemplated in the criteria for the 1974-1975 models; however, if results of models implemented in 1973-1974 warrant, these criteria could be altered. The aim of the task force is to maintain flexibility in reaching the goal of competency in education.

Following evaluation and analysis of the results of the 1974-1975 models, and again depending on State Board of Education direction, the task force will complete work on a plan for certification and recertification of state educators based on competency. This plan will have its roots in the results of models developed in 1973-1974 and 1974-1975.

Based on findings and conclusions of models developed in other parts of the nation, and based on experience with development of other flexible programs in the schools of New Mexico

during very recent years, the task force feels that there will be an adequate number of commonalities among the models as developed for this state to provide for a uniform competency based certification and recertification plan. In other words, there will be enough common elements within the models that some common plan can be generated upon which to base certification and recertification statewide.

Thus, the task force is committed to the concept of allowing the models to shape the common plan for certification and recertification, rather than to the approach of developing the certification/recertification plan and requiring that the models conform to this.

New Mexico is working diligently to develop a competency based education/certification system which will reflect the individual needs of the schools, the children and the communities and at the same time satisfy the important criteria for certification and recertification. If this can be accomplished, greater student achievement for each education dollar will be reasonably assured.

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